

has made a mockery of commitments that Belarus freely undertook when it joined the OSCE in 1992.

Nothing has changed for the better since last October's fundamentally flawed parliamentary elections and rigged referendum allowing Lukashenka unlimited terms as president. In November, Lukashenka appointed Viktor Sheiman as head of the powerful Presidential Administration, despite credible evidence linking Sheiman to the disappearances of opposition leaders and a journalist in 1999 and 2000.

The harassment and persecution of civil society has intensified. A top opposition figure, Mikhail Marinich, was sentenced in late December on the charge of stealing, of all things, U.S. government property—in this case, computers—despite the fact that the U.S. Embassy in Minsk makes no claims against Marinich. Clearly, Lukashenka wants to eliminate Marinich as a potential candidate for the 2006 presidential elections.

Other opposition leaders—Valery Levaneuski and Alyaksandr Vasilyeu—continue to serve terms in a minimum security colony after having been found guilty of “public slander” of the Belarusian leader. Their crime? Distributing leaflets urging people to take part in an unauthorized rally. The leaflets contained a satirical poem about Lukashenka. Another example of Belarus’ reluctance to promote human rights is the recent refusal to grant a visa to former OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Chairman and Romanian Foreign Minister Adrian Severin, who now serves as the UN Human Rights Commission’s Special Rapporteur on Belarus. The Belarusian regime has also clamped down on independent NGOs and prodemocracy political parties with Kafkaesque legal requirements and has mounted a full-fledged assault on independent trade unions. Problems are being experienced by religious communities attempting to operate freely.

As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, charged with monitoring and encouraging compliance by all 55 participating States with OSCE agreements, I call upon the Belarusian authorities to live up to their freely-undertaken commitments with respect to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Last October, President Bush signed into law the Belarus Democracy Act, which had been introduced in the Senate by then Helsinki Commission Chairman Senator Campbell and in the House by commission co-chair CHRIS SMITH, stating:

We welcome this legislation as a means to bolster friends of freedom and to nurture the growth of democratic values, habits, and institutions within Belarus. The fate of Belarus will rest not with a dictator, but with the students, trade unionists, civic and religious leaders, journalists, and all citizens of Belarus claiming freedom for their nation.

It is essential that we in the Congress, together with the administration

and the OSCE, keep faith with the courageous people of Belarus struggling to ensure freedom and democratic values for their long-suffering country.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

MS. NICOLE WAYANT AND MR. CORMAC O’CONNOR

• Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I congratulate and honor two young Kansas students who have achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service in their communities. Nicole Wayant of Topeka, KS, and Cormac O’Connor of Prairie Village, KS, have just been named State Honorees in The 2005 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, an annual honor conferred on only one high school student and one middle-level student in each State, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Ms. Wayant is being recognized for creating a youth health council to promote the benefits of an active, healthy lifestyle among the students in her school district.

Mr. O’Connor is being recognized for implementing an intergenerational arts program that brought senior citizens and at-risk children together for classes in visual arts, movements, theater and jazz.

In light of numerous statistics that indicate Americans today are less involved in their communities than they once were, it’s vital that we encourage and support the kind of selfless contributions these young people have made. People of all ages need to think more about how we, as individual citizens, can work together at the local level to ensure the health and vitality of our towns and neighborhoods. Young volunteers like Ms. Wayant and Mr. O’Connor are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.

The program that brought these young role models to our attention—The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards—was created by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1995 to impress upon all youth volunteers that their contributions are critically important and highly valued, and to inspire other young people to follow their example. Over the past 10 years, the program has become the Nation’s largest youth recognition effort based solely on unity service, with more than 170,000 young people participating since its inception.

Ms. Wayant and Mr. O’Connor should be extremely proud to have been singled out from such a large group of dedicated volunteers. As part of their recognition, they will come to Washington in early May, along with other 2005 Spirit of Community honorees

from across the country, for several days of special events, including a Congressional breakfast on Capitol Hill. While here in Washington, ten will be named America’s top youth volunteers of the year by a distinguished national selection committee.

I applaud Ms. Wayant and Mr. O’Connor for their initiative in seeking to make their communities better places to live, and for the positive impact they have had on the lives of others. I also salute the other young people in my State who were named Distinguished Finalists by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards for their outstanding volunteer service. They are Shawn Bryant of Leavenworth, KS, Brad Harris of Saint Paul, KS, Amanda Knox of Clifton, KS, and Creighton Olsen of Larned, KS.

All of these young people have demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today’s world and they deserve our sincere admiration and respect. Their actions show that young Americans can—and do—play important roles in their communities, and that America’s community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.●

COMMEMORATING THE 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I bring to the attention of my colleagues a signal anniversary occurring tomorrow, the 50th wedding anniversary of Harry and Judy Maitland.

Harry and Judy Maitland were married in St. Louis, MO on March 5, 1955. Harry, a fellow Navy man, served on the U.S.S. *Randolph* during the Korean War. Subsequently, he worked for Missouri Pacific and Union Pacific, and he and Judy were blessed with three children and eleven grandchildren. I join all of their family and friends in congratulating Harry and Judy on their signal anniversary.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with

accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-1190. A communication from the Chairman, Broadcasting Board of Governors, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of proposed legislation to authorize appropriations for the Broadcasting Board of Governors for Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007, received on March 3, 2005; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-1191. A communication from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Loss Limitations Rules" ((RIN1545-BA52) (TD 9187)) received on March 3, 2005; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-1192. A communication from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "2005 Census Count" (Notice 2005-16) received on March 3, 2005; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-1193. A communication from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "TD: Diversification Requirements for Variable Annuity, Endowment, and Life Insurance Contracts" ((RIN1545-BB77)(TD 9185)) received on March 3, 2005; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-1194. A communication from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Modification of Notice 2005-4" (Notice 2005-4) received on March 3, 2005; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-1195. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program: Durable Medical Equipment Regional Carrier Service Areas and Related Matters" (RIN0938-AL76) received on March 3, 2005; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-1196. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program: Changes to the Medicare Claims Appeal Procedures" (RIN0938-AM73) received on March 3, 2005; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-1197. A communication from the Assistant Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of the Trinity Lakes Viticultural Area" (RIN1513-AA29) received on March 3, 2005; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1198. A communication from the Chief, Division of Scientific Authority, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Special Rule to Control the Trade of Threatened Beluga Sturgeon (Huso huso)" (RIN1018-AT54) received on March 3, 2005; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-1199. A communication from the Director, Office of Surface Mining, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Kentucky Regulatory Program" received on March 3, 2005; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-1200. A communication from the Director, Office of Hearings and Appeals, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Probate of Indian Trust Estates" (RIN1094-AA50) received on March 3, 2005; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC-1201. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Labor-Management Programs, Employment Standards Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Annual Report of the Department's Office of Labor-Management Standards, received on March 3, 2005; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BIDEN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. CLINTON, and Mr. NELSON of Florida):

S. 530. A bill to amend section 691 of title 10, United States Code, to increase the end strengths of the Army and the Marine Corps for fiscal years after fiscal year 2005, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. SANTORUM (for himself and Mr. SPECTER):

S. 531. A bill to amend the Agricultural Adjustment Act to exempt certain identified varieties of tomatoes from agricultural marketing orders; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. DEWINE:

S. 532. A bill to reduce temporarily the duty on palm fatty acid distillate; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. HUTCHISON:

S. 533. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify that a NADBank guarantee is not considered a Federal guarantee for purposes of determining the tax-exempt status of bonds; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. LOTT:

S. Res. 72. A resolution providing for members on the part of the Senate of the Joint Committee on Printing and the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 333

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 333, a bill to hold the current regime in Iran accountable for its threatening behavior and to support a transition to democracy in Iran.

S. 397

At the request of Mr. CRAIG, the name of the Senator from South Caro-

lina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 397, a bill to prohibit civil liability actions from being brought or continued against manufacturers, distributors, dealers, or importers of firearms or ammunition for damages, injunctive or other relief resulting from the misuse of their products by others.

S. 407

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 407, a bill to restore health care coverage to retired members of the uniformed services, and for other purposes.

S. 471

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. CHAFEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 471, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for human embryonic stem cell research.

S. 489

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI), the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) were added as cosponsors of S. 489, a bill to amend chapter 111 of title 28, United States Code, to limit the duration of Federal consent decrees to which State and local governments are a party, and for other purposes.

S. 495

At the request of Mr. CORZINE, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) were added as cosponsors of S. 495, a bill to impose sanctions against perpetrators of crimes against humanity in Darfur, Sudan, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 56

At the request of Mr. REID, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 56, a resolution designating the month of March as Deep-Vein Thrombosis Awareness Month, in memory of journalist David Bloom.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BIDEN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. CLINTON, and Mr. NELSON of Florida):

S. 530. A bill to amend section 691 of title 10, United States Code, to increase the end strengths of the Army and the